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Judiciary Committee Democrats Defeat Court Stripping Bill

In a surprise vote today in the Judiciary Committee, Democrats defeated legislation to strip the federal courts of the ability to review constitutional challenges concerning the Pledge of Allegiance. The bill, H.R. 2389, was defeated on a 15-15 vote, with all Democrats voting against the measure, joined by South Carolina Republican Bob Inglis.

While it appeared that the Republicans were planning to employ procedural motions to reconsider the vote, by the afternoon it became clear that they were forced to abandon those efforts.

Commenting on the vote today, Rep. John Conyers Jr. stated, "although I firmly believe that voluntary recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is constitutional and have voted in favor of a resolution to that effect, it would have been wrong to use this issue to commit another wrong - stripping the federal courts of jurisdiction to review constitutional issues.

"By denying the Supreme Court its historical role as the final authority on the constitutionality of federal laws, this bill would have unconstitutionally usurped the Court's power and violated the principle of separation of powers that sets our government apart from the rest of the world."

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